

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 29, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Today, the U.S. Senate voted to confirm me for the position of Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. As a result, I must submit to you herewith my resignation as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, effective as of 6 p.m. pdt on Tuesday, August 2, 2005. I have also written to Governor Schwarzenegger to advise him of my resignation.

Mr. Speaker, even more significant than the privilege of serving for 17 years in the House of Representatives has been the opportunity to serve with you in the elected Majority Leadership for the last 10 years. Thank you, again, for your friendship, your courage under fire, your wisdom, and your sterling example over so many years.

I very much look forward to continuing to work with you and serving the Nation in my new position.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER COX,
U.S. Representative.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 29, 2005.

Hon. ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER,
Governor, State of California, State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA.

DEAR GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER: Today, I have been confirmed by the U.S. Senate for the position of Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Accordingly, I am writing to inform you that, effective as of 6 p.m. pdt on Tuesday, August 2, 2005, I will resign my seat as the Representative of the 48th District of California in the U.S. House of Representatives. I have also written to House Speaker Hastert to inform him of the timing of my resignation.

For the past 17 years, I have had the great privilege and honor of representing the people of Orange County, California in the House of Representatives. My service in the Congress has been a truly rewarding experience, and I am grateful to Orange County's citizens for putting their trust and faith in me. As a member of the elected Majority Leadership and Chairman of three House committees, I have been especially privileged to have had the opportunity to work closely with you and our other elected California leaders on so many shared priorities.

Thank you, again, for your friendship and support. I look forward to continuing to work with you, and to serve California and the Nation in my new position.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER COX,
U.S. Representative.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from California (Mr. Cox), the whole number of the House is 433.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 29, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 29, 2005 at 6:50 p.m.:

That the Senate agreed to the conference report H.R. 3.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3512.

With best wishes, I am sincerely,
JEFF TRANDAH,
Clerk of the House.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, August 2, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on August 2, 2005, at 1:40 pm:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1132.

Appointments: Delegation to the British-American Interparliamentary Group.

With best wishes, I am sincerely,
JEFF TRANDAH,
Clerk of the House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the Speaker signed the following enrolled bill on Friday, July 29, 2005:

H.R. 3512, to provide an extension of administrative expenses for highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the highway trust fund pending enactment of a law reauthorizing the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century;

and the following enrolled bill on Wednesday, August 10, 2005:

H.R. 3, to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes;

and Speaker pro tempore TOM DAVIS of Virginia signed the following enrolled bills on Wednesday, August 3, 2005:

H.R. 6, to ensure jobs for our future with secure, affordable, and reliable energy;

H.R. 1132, to provide for the establishment of a controlled substance monitoring program in each State.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL AP-
PROPRIATIONS ACT TO MEET IM-
MEDIATE NEEDS ARISING FROM
THE CONSEQUENCES OF HURRI-
CANE KATRINA, 2005

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it shall be in order at any time without intervention of any point of order to consider H.R. 3645 in the House; the bill shall be considered as read; the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill to final passage without intervening motion except (1) 10 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit; clause 10 of rule XX shall not apply to the question of passage of the bill; and all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not intend to object; but I think it would be helpful for Members to understand that if this proposal is agreed to, and I expect it to be, that there will be 5 minutes of debate on each side of the issue, and then any Member who wishes to comment will have an opportunity on a Special Order, which immediately follows, to do so.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OBEY. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEWIS of California. I appreciate the gentleman yielding. I just wanted to emphasize a comment you just made that the limited debate of 10 minutes is designed to have us expedite the paperwork and otherwise from this process. In the meantime, we know the Members want to be heard so there will be a Special Order following the passage of the bill so that we can move forward with the paperwork and make sure the President gets this on his desk as quickly as possible.

Mr. OBEY. Continuing under my reservation, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that if this motion is agreed to, I do think that the situation in the Gulf Coast is serious enough that it warrants more than a dog and pony show and that it warrants some thoughtful discussion of how problems like this might be avoided in the future. I would simply say under my reservation that I have been horrified watching my television set over the past few days as I moved around my district in Wisconsin to see the absolute inadequacy of the Federal response to what has occurred. I would hope that the magnitude of the disaster which we have seen would make

us all think through the degree of lack of discipline and denial that has marked this country's preparation for not just natural disasters but disasters of other origins as well.

Point one: I was personally appalled to see an interview with a representative of the Army Corps of Engineers in which he explained away our failure to prepare for anything worse than a level three hurricane for the New Orleans area by saying in essence that a cost-benefit analysis had been done, and it was concluded that it was not cost beneficial for us to prepare for anything above a level three hurricane. What that in essence says is that you are not going to worry about the biggest disasters that can occur; you are only going to worry about the smaller ones.

Whether it is with a hurricane or whether the action of the Mississippi River a number of years ago, how many times do we have to see disasters overwhelm our preparedness before we recognize that we are playing Russian roulette with people's lives, with their livelihood and with the life of whole communities if we do not prepare for the worst?

Point two: I think it is fair to say that the administration and the Congress itself has not covered itself with glory in terms of anticipating problems like this. We have seen the Congress in fiscal year 2004 cut the budget request by \$170 million for FEMA. We have seen an amendment by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) to try to supplement FEMA funding several years ago turned down by the House. We have seen flood control projects in the Gulf short-sheeted in Federal budget requests from the executive, and we have seen now stories, one by Sidney Blumenthal, which makes the point that in early 2001, FEMA management issued a report saying that a hurricane striking New Orleans was one of the three most likely disasters in the U.S., including a terrorist attack on New York City.

Yet the Federal budget has not demonstrated any serious response to that warning. And we have seen other comments as well in the paper, including a number by Louisiana papers, documenting the lack of effective Federal response. Another statement in the New York Times indicated that 5 days after Katrina hit, the response from our government was still spectacularly inadequate and in the words of the editorial amounts to a stunning lack of both preparation and urgency in the Federal Government's response. I would hope that the pictures that we have seen on our television sets would change that.

□ 1315

Continuing under my reservation, the third point I would simply make is that I think the devastation and utter destruction that we have seen indicates that we have a serious problem not just with respect to our response to natural disasters but in response to other po-

tential disasters. I would hope that we would take to heart the lessons that this disaster ought to teach us about the need for more adequate preparation across the board, including potential terrorist attacks.

There are those of us in the Congress who still believe that we are not doing enough to secure our borders.

There are those of us who still believe that we are not doing enough to protect this country against terrorist attacks from air cargo.

There are those of us who believe that we are not doing nearly enough to protect this country against terrorist attacks by the use of containers in our ports; and in my view, the response of the administration and the Congress since 9/11 on that score has been totally inadequate.

I think that this disaster in the Gulf demonstrates the importance of ending the practice of casual thinking on these potential problems.

Point four: and I do not know the answer to this, but I know questions have been raised about whether or not the heavy involvement of our Guard and Reserve forces in Iraq is in any way linked to the fact that we have had so few Guard and Reserve personnel being used in response to this disaster. I do not know whether there is a direct causation or not, but I do know that there are some 11,000 Guard and Reserve forces from the affected States now in Iraq and those are obviously troops that cannot be used on their home ground.

I think we need to examine very carefully whether or not this demonstrates that we need to do more to build up the size of our regular Army forces so that we do have a greater capacity to use the Guard and Reserve forces at home when they are needed.

I would also say that every time that we have a disaster, Congress responds by tossing together an appropriation bill for an emergency appropriation. It would seem to me after all of the disasters that we have had that we should have a more regularized approach to the problem. I have introduced in the past, and I will introduce again, legislation asking that we establish an experience-rated insurance fund from which all States can purchase insurance coverage against future disasters so that you have a ready-made source of funding the moment these disasters hit.

There are five or six States in the Union that experience disasters on a fairly regular basis, and it seems to me that we need to have an experience-rated insurance system so that we take into full account the cost of hurricanes and the cost of other disasters that might occur. If we did that, we might see a greater level of preparation with respect to, for instance, long-term planning by the Corps of Engineers to deal with the most severe hurricanes.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation obviously has to pass, but I hope this represents just the beginning of some new

thinking so that we do not wind up 3 or 4 years from now facing yet another problem as unprepared as we apparently were for this unfortunate and heart-rending incident.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, and I will not object, I want to say that I appreciate the fact that there will be a Special Order after this bill is debated where Members can say how we feel about it, but I really think it is inappropriate. I think that there should be substantial debate on this bill itself, not that we want to slow down any kind of funding, but frankly we fiddled and faddled for days and days, and now we are told that we can only have 5 minutes per side to debate this bill. I think it is wrong. I think Members of Congress who have rushed back here, who want to help, who want to make sure that the people of the Gulf are given their due and the moneys, we should have the right to debate this bill now. We watch TV and we see the looters and much has been made about the looters who are coming and looting in New Orleans. I think quite frankly with the prices of gas rising, the real looters are the big oil companies. They are looting the American people. It is unconscionable that we have had a spike of 30 to 50 cents in gasoline prices 2 days after this disaster happened. There is no way that that could have been reflected at the pump so quickly. So it is looting the American public, and I think these are the issues that Congress should debate. I am glad that our Energy and Commerce Committee is having a hearing on this on Wednesday, but the American people ought to hear Congress debating this. What are we going to do to bring relief to our people with these huge and unconscionable gas prices? We are doing nothing. We are fiddling while Rome is burning. So while I say that it is very important that we are passing this legislation quickly today and we should be doing this, I wish that we had had hours of debate on this, yesterday or today. It should not be where we have 10 minutes of debate because we quickly have to get the bill to the President. We need to get the bill to the President as quickly as possible but Congress needs to debate the issues of the day.

So while I will not object because we have to get the relief to the people of the Gulf, the fact is that Congress needs to debate the issue of high gas prices. Our constituents all across America are suffering. The oil companies are making record profits. Frankly, they ought to turn some of those profits back to the American people to try to keep the price of gasoline down. This is all tied in, and how dare they use this terrible disaster, this terrible tragedy to loot the American people and to spike the prices of gasoline higher and higher.

I hope this Congress can have a full and free debate on this. I do not object because I want to get the money there as quickly as possible, but this Congress needs to do and this President needs to do something about the high price of gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House, I call up the bill (H.R. 3645) making emergency supplemental appropriations to meet immediate needs arising from the consequences of Hurricane Katrina, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3645

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, namely:

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
DISASTER RELIEF

For an additional amount for "Disaster Relief", \$10,000,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the amount provided herein is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 402 of H. Con. Res. 95 (109th Congress).

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, DEFENSE-WIDE
(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For an additional amount for "Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide", \$500,000,000 for emergency hurricane expenses, to support costs of evacuation, emergency repairs, deployment of personnel, and other costs resulting from immediate relief efforts, to remain available until September 30, 2006: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Defense may transfer these funds to appropriations for military personnel, operation and maintenance, procurement, family housing, Defense Health Program, and working capital funds: *Provided further*, That funds transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: *Provided further*, That this transfer authority is in addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense: *Provided further*, That upon a determination that all or part of the funds transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of Defense shall, not more than 5 days after making transfers from this appropriation, notify the congressional defense committees in writing of any such transfer: *Provided further*, That the amount provided herein is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 402 of H. Con. Res. 95 (109th Congress).

This Act may be cited as the "Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to Meet Immediate Needs Arising From the Consequences of Hurricane Katrina, 2005".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We have come together today, for all of us in the House of Representatives know that words are not adequate to begin to deal with this horrendous natural disaster that has beset all Americans but particularly those people in the region of the Gulf.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to speak extensively here today but to say that the bill is designed to make sure that all of us understand that America will respond to this tragedy. Money is not going to make the difference in the final analysis. This bill provides for \$10 billion to make sure that FEMA has enough flexibility and adequate dollars will be available to flow in the very near term as we really assess the cost moving forward. This will not be the last time we discuss this issue in terms of both financial strain and also the horrid strain it is placing upon those Americans who are directly affected. The bill beyond that provides \$500 million that will also be available for the Department of Defense to, in a flexible fashion, be of further assistance in this tragic disaster.

With that, I hope that the Members will participate in the Special Order that will follow this very brief debate in order to make sure that there is a complete airing as the House would seek its will.

Mr. Speaker, words cannot begin to describe the toll Mother Nature has taken on the people of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The levels of desperation and human suffering from Hurricane Katrina are unlike anything we have seen in our country.

I do not intend to take much time today for the need in the affected region is so great. This is not a time for words or political rhetoric. It is a time for action. We need to move quickly, to save lives, and help the people of the region get back on their feet. The President has promised an unprecedented level of immediate aid. Congress is backing that promise with the funding and resources to keep the aid flowing.

This is a simple 2½-page supplemental. It contains two sections: \$10 billion for FEMA within the Department of Homeland Security; and \$500 million for the Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide account within the Department of Defense. The \$10.5 billion figure was determined based on what FEMA is now spending on a daily basis and how much is needed to take us out a few weeks until we get a better assessment of what the long-term funding needs will be.

At the beginning of this week, FEMA had roughly \$2.6 billion in its Disaster Relief Fund and \$1.5 billion in the Flood Insurance Program. In recent days, FEMA and OMB concluded that these funds were being utilized at a rate of between \$500 and \$750 million per

day. President Bush and our leadership made the decision to convene the Congress in an emergency session and move this supplemental to the President for his signature today.

We do not yet know how much the recovery from this disaster is going to cost. Our resolution today provides an immediate infusion of money to allow FEMA and the Department of Defense to address the most immediate needs resulting from this natural disaster. Costs associated with evacuation, emergency repairs, deployment of personnel, and other costs resulting from immediate relief efforts are included in this package.

This initial step today will ensure that there is no disruption in funding for relief efforts. We fully expect to be approving additional emergency funding in the coming weeks. Quite frankly, it will take some time to assess the full scope and cost of this disaster. Much of the damage is still underwater and the full extent is still unknown. Damage assessments will be collected from a great many Federal entities—FEMA, the Corps of Engineers, the Coast Guard—and others.

The destruction that has overtaken New Orleans and the Gulf Coast will require months, and even years, of intense effort to recover and rebuild. It will take nothing less than a domestic Marshall Plan to rebuild new roads, utilities, homes, and businesses. On this point, let me be very clear: Rebuild, we must. Rebuild, we will. Congress and the Bush administration is one-hundred percent committed to the rebuilding process and today's action is the first step.

One final thought as I conclude my remarks: There is no greater spirit than the American spirit responding to citizens in need. When we see suffering, we want to do something. We want to lend a hand. Many people are responding to this tragic circumstance by offering their prayers and opening their hearts and their checkbooks to organizations like the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross. I encourage my colleagues and our citizens to do the same in the days and weeks ahead.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, by way of explanation, this bill provides \$10.5 billion, \$10 billion of which will go to FEMA, half a billion dollars to DOD. It provides for relief efforts for the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane. The funds to DOD will go to the operation and maintenance account with broad transfer authority. They will eventually wind up, I am certain, being used for procurement for housing and matters like that. The funds for FEMA may be used for any traditional purpose under the FEMA legislation, including public assistance, shelter, food, et cetera.

Let me simply say that I hope that we recognize this is just the initial downpayment in the costs that are going to be associated with this incredible disaster. I would also hope that we would recognize that we have for a long time been making inadequate investments in activities that could lessen the impact of disasters such as this, and I would hope we would recognize that values such as preventing this

horrendous event from occurring again ought to be much higher on our values scale than they have been in past months and certainly in past recent years.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge support of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the minority leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time, and I thank him for his very strong statement. I wish to right off the bat associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Wisconsin, our ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, his remarks that he made in reserving the right to object. I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), who knows firsthand as do I what an impact a natural disaster is to a State and how important it is to hear right away from the Federal Government as to what our commitment is to recovery.

I remember, as I am sure the gentleman from California does, when the Loma Prieta Earthquake hit Northern California, it was such a shock and such a surprise as with our colleagues today. We could see in my area of San Francisco parts of the city burning, bridges down and impassable, the people in need, without adequate shelter and the rest. The San Francisco Bay Area, let me broaden it, Loma Prieta is in the southern part of the bay area, as the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) is reminding me.

Jamie Whitten came to the floor that day and said, Last night there was an earthquake in San Francisco. I immediately called in my staff and said, what is it that we can do to help. We want to remove all doubt in anyone's mind that we understand the gravity of the situation, that the social compact that the people have with the Federal Government will be one that will be honored and that this will not be part of their problem, the same thing that I know that the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) understood at the time of the Northridge Earthquake in Southern California where the response was one that helped remove doubt as to the fact that we are one Nation and that we are always moving to be a more perfect Union.

That challenge that our Founding Fathers gave us in the Constitution's preamble, to form a more perfect Union, it is the first responsibility listed there, is one that we must remember now, because we are faced with a situation where so many people in the Gulf States, in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama and Florida, are affected by this. In other natural disasters, as with our earthquakes in California, certain parts of the community were affected and other parts of the community helped the emergency relief and the recovery. Here we have a situation where we have a total devastation of a region. Who is there to

help? All the more reason for us as the Congress of the United States to come together, to give hope to these people, to say to them that we hear your cries.

□ 1330

We hear them and we are told about them, also, from our distinguished Members of Congress from the region. The gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) lost his home, his only home, and those of many of his staff did as well. The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) has been manning an emergency center to help people get help. The list goes on. The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON) saw his whole city practically get wiped out. But I am sure that everyone on each side of the aisle has stories that they know firsthand. The gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), the ranking Democrat on our Committee on Homeland Security who knows full well what our capability is as a country and what an attack this is of nature and therefore what more we need to do to get this all done. The list goes on. There are many heroes in this.

So when I hear my distinguished colleague for whom I have great esteem, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), say that we cannot have a full debate on this, we will just do it as a Special Order because we have got to get this to the President right away, that would have been a very good argument to have this special session of Congress much earlier this week, because it was clear that although we did not have all of the facts, we knew that people were hurting very badly in our country, that there was a need for additional resources, and it was important to bring the considerable talent on both sides of the aisle together in Washington, DC to make a judgment about the facts and to allocate the resources.

Just a couple of days ago it was thought that there was enough money to cover until next week, until we came back. So what? As it turns out, that was not a correct assessment. But even if it had been, why should we not have been here to give hope, to give inspiration if we are capable of that, but at least to remove all doubt in everyone's mind that this is the first order of business for us and that is to protect our people and try to make them whole in time of a natural disaster.

But we are here, and what we need to do and what we need people to hear is the strongest bipartisan cooperation, whatever the timing, on how we address their needs. Their needs have been referenced in terms of energy. Energy is important, not just at the pump, although let me say about that, pox on those who would price gouge at the pump to our people in our country who are already suffering from debilitating prices at the pump that enable some not to even be able to get to work, and now in this tragic time we do not want matters made worse with price gouging and there will be a price

to pay for that. But energy for many reasons. Energy to get product, plywood, whatever it is, to where it is needed, to rebuild in the Gulf States, energy to keep the lights on, too. Such a high percentage of people, there are probably 5 million people, without electricity as we gather here today. Two million homes, 5 million people without electricity as we gather here.

Energy, and I know others will address it more specifically, is a very important part of this, especially since the Gulf States are such an important source of production and transport of energy to the rest of the country.

Our children. Think about the children. Right now they are supposed to be starting school. Instead, they are starting to wonder where their homes are, where their loved ones are, if their parents have jobs and if indeed they even have a school to go to. We have an enormous task ahead of us. Our children will forever be marked by the trauma of this hurricane unless we quickly take them to a place that says, there was a tragedy, people responded, you were considered a priority. Hopefully, they will get through. My own grandchildren who live in Houston and see all these children coming into the Houston area, Mr. Speaker, your area, they are becoming afraid of rain. If it rains, will our house be washed away? Just after 9/11 when kids were saying if a plane goes overhead, should we be afraid of that? We must reassure our children and eliminate the traumatic effect on top of the physical displacement that they are suffering here.

So whatever the allocation of these resources are, I hope it is enough. And if it is not, again with the facts as our friends, we must allocate the resources to make sure these children are in school.

I was telling some of the leaders yesterday in a conference call that when I visited Macedonia and other places in the Balkans, when these children were displaced and they did not have any classroom situation, it compounded the terrible experience that they had until a school situation was created for them. Think of what this is going to mean with people who have been sent to other States. How are those schools going to absorb all of these children even within their own States, but in two different school districts. In the allocation of our resources, I hope that we will have children first in terms of their education, their health.

That takes us to the significant public health issues that we are facing there. Dead bodies floating in the water, some say that is not a danger. I do not know. It sounds dangerous to me. The chemicals that are in the water. There are so many things that we do need the facts on. So it is not a question of speculation. What are the facts? What is the public health challenge that we face? How do we allocate the resources to stop that immediately, because if our children are sick and they see death around them, much

of the rest that we do is not going to seem as relevant.

We know that the list goes on. Shelter, people losing everything. I can tell you from my earthquake experience, and this is a little discouraging, you really are never made whole. The history of your family, the photographs, the sentimental attachment that you may have, some of that is just now to be forgotten. But if we cannot make them whole in the same way, we certainly have to give people hope in a new way that the life that they will lead will be something that not only replaces, but enhances, their experience, because they have been through a lot and in our perfect Union, as we embrace each other as people of America, we have to do so in a way that honors the social compact between the people and the government.

That means all people. It does not mean people who have the wherewithal to get away to a second or third home. It does not mean people who can get helicoptered out, and God bless them for their success in being able to do that. God bless them for taking that route. But it does mean that if people are left behind because of their economic status, then that is wrong. That is wrong and that is not something that this \$10 billion should support.

We must, if this is not enough, do more. It is all an investment. It will cause an economic growth in the region as we rebuild, creating jobs, giving hope, bringing people home that I think will more than return to the Treasury what we are putting out there. But right now they need our help and they need it in a very substantial way. They need it for their health, for their housing, for their jobs, the education of their children, for the environment in which they live so that it is healthy and not again a public health hazard. They need to be considered full participants in this great country that we are.

Let me say that there are many heroes in all of this. I named some of our colleagues, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON), the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR), the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), those whose experiences I know firsthand. The list goes on and on. Again, others will speak from their firsthand experience about it. But the biggest heroes of course are the people who are on the front line all the time working very hard. I would hope that as we did in our earthquake situation, and forgive me for keeping returning to it, but it is an experience that we thought was the most desperate until we saw what we are seeing now, and this goes beyond anything I think that anyone can imagine, that the disaster assistance centers must be established, that people have to know what they have a right to in terms of their emergency assistance and that what people have a right to in terms of recovery, in terms of SBA loans and the rest of that.

There are some things in place that can help people right away if we can get FEMA in place to help them. But again we must remove all doubt that we are there for all people. It cannot be viewed as for those who will receive assistance and those who have not will go by the wayside. This issue of social justice, of economic justice, of the economic life of a city, of a State that rests on the fullest participation of all of its people must respond in the fullest way to all of its people.

I will say once again that I regret we could not have come here sooner with fuller participation of Members who have, again on both sides of the aisle, enormous experience in public health and energy issues and housing issues and education issues and the rest; but let us say that we get this running start now, and I have asked the Speaker that when we come back next week with the full participation of our membership that we establish a hurricane task force that would include the ranking members, the chairmen of the committees of jurisdiction relevant to this emergency relief and recovery and that that task force will immediately move forward in an expedited manner and not be slowed down by business as usual, but instead again give hope to these people.

Again, I associate myself with what the gentleman from Wisconsin said. Even 4 years later after 9/11, there are still many things that have not been done, that have been clearly indicated are necessary. We have the resources to do it. It is just a question of priorities. That takes us to what this is about, what our priorities are as a country. How we allocate our resources is a statement of our values. As we leave here today and we go forward in the weeks ahead, we must make sure that everyone understands that a statement of our values is to form a more perfect Union by meeting the needs of our people and not having half a loaf when they are all Americans and entitled to full recovery.

If we can spend \$20 billion on reconstruction in Iraq, we can certainly use that as a start on reconstruction in America. I say that with the fullest appreciation for the importance of the reconstruction of Iraq. I respect that that is important to stability there. I respect that it is important to stability here, for us to do that. Again, I wish we were here sooner. We are not. Let us go forward. Let us do it in a bipartisan way. I think the last thing that the American people need to see is any kind of partisan bickering about how we go forward, but nonetheless we have to have a strong commitment to these people.

In the Bible, Isaiah tells us that to minister to the needs of God's creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the God who made us. Let us make the work that we do here an act of worship to the God who made us and an act of respect for the people who sent us here.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the distinguished majority whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. We are dealing with perhaps the worst natural disaster in our Nation's history. Residents of the Gulf Coast States affected by the hurricane have lost loved ones, have lost homes, have been displaced from their communities, not just by the thousands or the tens of thousands in terms of displacement but by the hundreds of thousands and by the millions.

I am committed and I hope we all are to making sure that we have the full support of the Federal Government, that they have the full support of the Federal Government to get the responses they need to begin to recover and rebuild from this catastrophe.

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I also understand that the Federal Government is only part of the answer. The severity of this tragedy demands something from each of us. We must answer the call to personally give to those in most need of our help. The American people are generous, and we know that Americans will come to the aid of those in need. While our thoughts go out to those who are suffering in the loss of this catastrophe, it is critical that we respond to this in an organized manner, addressing the most urgent needs first.

It has been said in the last few minutes that we should have had this session earlier this week. But being here yesterday, I believe at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, the number that we decided we needed today was bigger than it was at 12 o'clock yesterday. We were hopeful that of course we could go until Tuesday based on funding that was available and come back and deal with these problems as they need to be dealt with.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, you and others have directed the committee chairmen to do everything they can to move forward on every front, to look at where their committee might make the best recommendations to this body. That is why today we are passing this supplemental to get FEMA through the process of next week.

We all need to be committed to making sure that the people affected will have the full support of the Federal Government. We need to look at what has happened to States whose revenue base has been decimated. We need to look at what is happening to our economy. We need to do our job. We need to do it in a manner that is not partisan, and we need to move forward to take this first step today.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close the debate on this measure and in doing so suggest that those who are looking with interest that one of the great things that has happened in recent years is that we often televise

our discussions here. While that theoretically would build a base of support on the part of Americans for the Congress, it is strange to me that the polling would suggest that many Americans are very disconcerted by the tendency for extreme rhetoric on both sides of the aisle often carrying on partisan battle for the sake of it and so the polls are just seen as coming down, down, down.

The reality of that is that the American people expect better of us than that. But Americans respond in times of crisis and tragedy. There is not any doubt that this tragic event that has been experienced by the people on the Gulf Coast is beyond imagination, but in reality also the public will see the Congress reflecting the best of our people. They do not want us pointing fingers at each other, trying to figure out who you can blame besides myself. They want us to recognize that we have a responsibility to serve our people, and in times of crisis especially respond to their basic needs, saving lives, extending those lives, helping them to begin to rebuild.

The destruction that has overtaken New Orleans and the Gulf Coast will require months and even years to completely respond to recovery. It will take nothing less than a domestic Marshall Plan to rebuild our roads and utilities and homes and businesses. On this point, let me be very clear. Rebuild we must. Rebuild we will. The majority whip suggested that Americans themselves are already responding individually. Indeed, as we responded to the tsunami in spades, Americans are already responding, with their hearts, with their prayers and indeed with their pocketbooks to the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and otherwise. They are going to make sure that money is not the question. We are beginning that process by way of our public responsibility today with this bill, but indeed in the weeks and months and years ahead, we will demonstrate as a Congress that America does its best work when we come together as Americans and not as partisans.

With the passage of this bill, this task is just beginning. I urge people on both sides of the aisle in the weeks ahead to make certain that we are holding hands with those victims and all of our Americans who want to see us respond in the way that we can respond and we are doing our best.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, after seeing the heart-wrenching images of so many of our fellow Americans in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama who have lost everything and are unfed, thirsty, suffering from oppressive heat in unsanitary conditions and waiting in desperation for help from their government, this bill is a truly no-brainer.

Every American is united in the heart-felt desire to help the hundreds of thousands who are literally crying out for assistance. \$10.5 billion is not nearly enough to get the job done, even in the short term. So far, judging from the horrible suffering of thousands of people that Americans see every night on their tele-

vision screens, our government has not been handling this crisis very well.

I hope that this money will have some impact in finally getting some aid to the needy. Before Katrina, who among us would have thought that Americans would be begging for food and water and become refugees in our own country? Yet that is exactly what has been happening for days in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Thousands of these people are within blocks of aid, but for days no aid has been provided to them.

However, it is not enough to simply vote for funding bills. We have to make sure that the relief money we are appropriating today and that we will be appropriating in the weeks, months and years ahead actually gets to the victims, and is not skimmed off by fast-buck artists and unscrupulous contractors.

This crisis is so enormous and so devastatingly serious that it is without precedent in our history. For these reasons, we need to get out of a "business as usual" frame of mind and implement some bold new approaches to helping our people in their time of dire need.

First, the Speaker should immediately create a Task Force or Special Committee with the power to cut across overlapping jurisdictional lines to prevent duplication and expedite needed legislation. This Committee should draw on and coordinate the expertise of the House standing committees in the areas of public health, housing, food and nutrition, safety, social services, energy, transportation and commerce. There is precedent for this approach. In 1977, Speaker O'Neil set up the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy, with legislative authority to deal with the energy crisis. I think we should use the same approach today.

Second, Congress should provide additional resources to the office of the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security to help insure that the hundreds of billions of dollars that will likely be necessary to care for our people and rebuild our country are not wasted through fraud, abuse, overpayments or ineffective government management.

We have many good reasons for concern about wasteful spending. In the three years since the Department of Homeland Security was created, numerous reports by the Congress, the Department's Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office have detailed instance after instance of contracting deficiencies, fraud, wasteful or lavish spending, lax oversight and management, procurement shortcomings, blurred lines of responsibility and lack of accountability.

In addition, the case of U.S. government spending in Iraq is instructive in what we don't want to do in the hurricane areas, where multi-billion-dollar contracts were given to big companies like Halliburton with little oversight or accountability. Pentagon investigators found over one quarter of a billion dollars in unacceptable or unsupported charges by Halliburton in a contract they had to restore Iraqi oil. Hundreds of millions more in other contracts have simply disappeared or cannot be accounted for.

These practices have not only cheated the taxpayers, but they cheat the people who need help from getting the benefits that these funds should have provided.

I believe that this Congress must make sure, to the greatest extent possible, that the funds that we are appropriating today and in the coming months to help the Hurricane

Katrina victims are directly squarely at helping the victims and not those who seek to profit at the expense of the victims.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, our country is once again devastated by a tragedy and our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and families who have been affected. I would like to wish the best to the Members of this House and their staffs from the affected areas; our prayers are with you and your families as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize and praise my constituents in El Paso, Texas, who like many other citizens have begun to organize efforts to send relief to those in need. Just yesterday, I helped kick off an initiative being called "48 Hours of Giving", a joint effort by the El Paso Sheriffs Department, the El Paso Chapter of the American Red Cross, the El Paso Salvation Army, and Bassett Place to raise money to help victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The El Paso County Sheriff's Department has also offered to send their Search and Rescue team to the area to provide assistance and the El Paso chapter of the American Red Cross has begun signing up and training volunteers to send to the Gulf Coast for relief. It truly is heartening to see communities come together in times of great need. It is my hope that we continue this spirit of generosity as we overcome this tragedy.

The passage of this Emergency Supplemental Appropriation will help continue the efforts to provide aid in a timely matter. While our communities are opening their hearts and doing whatever possible, it is our government's job to be doing everything it can with all resources to provide for the well-being of its own people. It is unconscionable that we are not taking care of our own, and that there are still Americans who have not been fed or sheltered or reunited with their families for five days now. It is embarrassing that this mighty nation that sends relief around the world has failed its own people so miserably.

I hope that this House and this government can rebuild our own devastated areas with the same enthusiasm and resources dedicated to rebuilding governments and nations abroad.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina is the largest natural disaster in the United States in decades, impacting large parts of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. There has been enormous damage to homes and businesses in the Gulf Coast region, as well as a significant loss of human life. Both the mayor of New Orleans and the governor of Louisiana now estimate that the number dead in New Orleans alone could be in the thousands. That estimate, if correct, would make Katrina the Nation's deadliest natural disaster since the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, which killed up to 6,000 people.

As co-chair of the Congressional Hazards Caucus, I unfortunately know firsthand how damaging natural disasters can be. While I am devastated by the enormity of this tragedy, I know that our faith, tenacity and determination ensure that we will work, as a Nation, to do all that we can to stem the crisis and help those in desperate need. Therefore, I rise today in full support of Congress's initial payment for disaster relief for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

This supplemental appropriations bill contains \$10 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and \$500 million

for the Department of Defense, for a total of \$10.5 billion in relief aid. This funding is desperately needed. Currently, FEMA is spending \$500 million a day to aid victims. If this supplemental spending bill is passed, the \$10 billion allotted to FEMA will enable it to assist the people affected by the hurricane for another 20 days. This aid will focus on critical areas, including public health and sanitation, public safety, housing, energy supplies, national transportation infrastructure, commerce, and the safety and adequacy of food supplies.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina and are turning to their elected representatives for assistance. We must do all we can to ensure an immediate and thorough response to these needs, and I fully support the \$10.5 billion supplemental appropriation for disaster relief.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, "National Preparedness Month," an initiative of the Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross to "encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools" began on September 1st. As the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I serve as the Honorary Congressional Co-Chair.

I was filled with sadness and disbelief when a press release from the Department came across my desk on Thursday announcing the initiative, saying that it would help Americans take simple steps such as "get a kit, make a plan, be informed, and get involved." The release seemed hollow and inappropriate in light of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and my home State of Mississippi.

My message to the Department and others in government is simple: we will need more than a few emergency kits and press releases to ensure that our Nation is adequately prepared to respond to a natural disaster or terrorist attack.

Hurricane Katrina was an unprecedented natural disaster, but to government officials tasked with protecting our Nation's communities, it should not have been a surprise.

Risk assessments have long told us that the Gulf Coast was in danger. The New Orleans Times-Picayune did a series of articles as early as 2002 about the risks to New Orleans from a hurricane. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created reports and conducted exercises on Gulf Coast preparedness and response issues. Yet, it pains me that here we are a week after the hurricane struck with potentially thousands of deaths, communities razed, a city underwater and under siege, and gasoline shortages and price gouging across the Nation.

From what I am seeing here in Mississippi, our government failed in both its preparedness and its response to this disaster. I also believe that if terrorists, rather than a hurricane, had attacked the Gulf Coast—the result would have been no different.

It appears our preparedness plans did not anticipate that thousands of people would be stranded in a stadium or convention center. Or that citizens would be roaming the streets begging for food and water and seeking shelter wherever they can find dry spots—as they're doing in Mississippi.

Instead of a well-prepared plan, victims have had to rely on ad hoc charity from cities with big hearts such as Houston that are

opening up venues to house now-homeless evacuees.

I have even heard that people are being put on two-day bus rides to Washington, DC, for shelter. While Washington should be commended for opening the DC Armory to victims, there is something wrong with having to put evacuees who have lost everything on buses for several days so far from what might be left, if anything, of their communities.

How will families and friends of these evacuees know how to find them? The same could be asked of those who are being turned away from the Astrodome and moved on to Dallas or San Antonio.

I also wonder how an electrical outage could take down such critical infrastructure as two oil and gas pipelines servicing a large section of the country? In 1998, President Clinton issued a presidential directive that required the government to look at pipeline and electrical grid security. In December 2003, President Bush issued a homeland security directive that repackaged the government's efforts.

The last several years in Congress, we have continually heard that the administration and private sector are working to secure our critical infrastructure. Yet, a power outage managed to cripple the pipelines, resulting in skyrocketing gas prices across the Nation. Overnight, some communities saw gas prices rise 40 cents, others \$2.00.

What message does this send to terrorists if our petroleum systems are so vulnerable? I also wonder what extra steps the Federal Government and the energy sector are taking today to ensure that these facilities are bolstered against attack from terrorists who might try to exploit the current situation.

Despite the increasing threat of hurricanes, especially this year, our government continued to cut the funding of the Army Corps of Engineers, thereby cutting the funding for flood control projects. In 2005, President Bush only requested \$3.9 million for the floor projects in New Orleans, although the Army Corps of Engineers said it would be able to spend \$20 million if the funds were only provided. Congress increased the funding to \$5.5 million, which still was insufficient to fund new construction contracts to secure the levees. For Fiscal Year 2006, the President has asked for even less, requesting only \$3 million. Allowing dams and levees to remain vulnerable to disaster and attack simply is unacceptable.

The administration must focus on the very real threats to our communities, towns, and cities if we are to secure our Nation. Preparedness is our prime defense against natural disasters and terrorist attacks. What Americans face today is a result of what happens when our government fails to prepare.

Natural disaster or terrorist attack—our government must do better. We all deserve better.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the United States is facing one of the most difficult challenges in its history, and I applaud the Congress for acting swiftly to introduce and pass H.R. 3645, a bill that will provide \$10 billion in relief money to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to bring relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. As the Representative of the 18th Congressional District that includes Harris County, the local government that has given the most support to the displaced residents of New Orleans, LA, Alabama, and Mis-

issippi, this supplemental appropriation has tremendous meaning and value.

The Washington Post called the effect of Katrina "[t]he largest displacement of Americans since the Civil War reverberated across the country from its starting point in New Orleans yesterday, as more than half a million people uprooted by Hurricane Katrina sought shelter, sustenance and the semblance of new lives." Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this appropriation because it is a very important first step to other very necessary ones to address the direct effects on Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana and the indirect effects on local governments that have stepped up to provide solace, safe haven, and hope such as my District of Houston, Texas and Harris County in particular. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the City of Houston, its teams of first responders, and the compassionate taxpayers who exhibited leadership in spiritual, physical, and economic assistance to their brothers and sisters from Louisiana.

I am disheartened by my colleagues among us who ask the question of what sense it makes to spend billions of dollars to rebuild a city that lies six feet below sea level. As leaders of the legislative branch of the federal government and as the people responsible for making policy, we must be very careful not to show insensitivity or the semblance of arrogance since our own family members or close friends are not among the sufferers of this historic tragedy. Today's Houston Chronicle reads "Weary refugees grateful to arrive at resting place: The next step for many is finding family members." [1][1] Thousands of displaced persons—this time not in the context of Sudanese refugees but American refugees, have been bused and helicoptered from New Orleans to Houston's Reliant Astrodome where some are now abused, raped, and assaulted because many of these individuals no longer have hope. Ten billion dollars is hardly enough to restore lives that have been lost, medical records that float in what used to be New Orleans, or homes where memories were created.

As a member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am pleased that, through the lessons learned from the attacks on 9/11, this Nation is at least well-versed on centralizing resources and manpower to respond as quickly and strongly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I support this very critical legislation, and I hope that my colleagues will show their compassion by joining in this support.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation to provide \$10 billion in emergency supplemental appropriations for the relief effort in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Without question, this appropriations bill is only an early estimate of the funding needs along the Gulf Coast and will most likely be only the first installment of federal funds dedicated to this devastated region.

As Houstonians learned in June 2001 during Tropical Storm Allison, it takes quite a while to accurately assess the damage and determine just how much is needed to repair that damage after a natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina. We remember all too well the flooding and destruction that Houstonians endured during Tropical Storm Allison. The memory of our pain and frustration during that time puts Houston in a unique position to empathize with and help our neighbors in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Houstonians are selflessly rising to the occasion and helping hurricane victims in need. Our hospitals within the Texas Medical Center are using their resources to evacuate the critically ill in Louisiana's hospitals and have done an admirable job of reuniting evacuated patients with their families. The good-hearted members of our community are coming out in droves to volunteer, to help in any way they can. And our schools are opening their doors to the children of Hurricane Katrina, so that the devastating events of the past week will not thwart their education and the bright future that lies ahead of them.

As we applaud the overwhelming generosity of the people of the Houston area—as well as communities all across the country who are coming together to provide much-needed help—it is critical to remember that the responsibility for relief ultimately lies with the federal government. There is no question that the federal government was unprepared for the kind of devastation that has ravaged Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. As we support the local governments who have, without hesitation, stepped in and played a tremendous role in the relief effort, we must ensure that the generosity of these communities is met with a federal commitment to reimburse them for the expenses they've incurred as good Samaritans.

Across our country, American hearts ache as we witness the extreme suffering of our fellow Americans in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. I am proud to support this \$10 billion disaster relief bill, which will be the first step in helping our brothers and sisters to rebuild their lives. Yet as we sympathize with their plight, it is impossible to deny that a majority of Katrina's victims fell through the cracks of our country's safety net long before the hurricane hit land. The faces of Hurricane Katrina will long be branded in our memory. Let us not forget those faces as we address future issues facing our country's safety net—a safety net that we know all too well can mean life or death for the disadvantaged in our country.

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, the ongoing scenes of devastation and despair caused by Hurricane Katrina are heart-wrenching and unprecedented in our Nation's history. We must and will unite in a national effort to assist our fellow citizens in these hours of overwhelming need.

Our condolences and prayers go out to all individuals who have been impacted by Hurricane Katrina, especially those who have lost loved ones in this horrific tragedy. Passage of this legislation makes it clear that all members of Congress, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike, are indeed united in our prayers for and commitment to the victims of this devastating event. We are also united in our admiration of the military and emergency services personnel who are working tirelessly to save lives and maintain order. Their heroic efforts, matched with the outpouring of support from the American people, are a testament to the character and compassion of our people.

While the days, weeks, and months ahead will be long and difficult, our Nation will meet this unprecedented challenge with unwavering determination, compassion, and courage. May God watch over the victims of this tragedy during this time of tremendous loss and suffering.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, my deepest condolences go to the victims of

Hurricane Katrina who have lost their lives, their homes and their livelihoods. For many, it did not have to be this way.

I represent south Florida, an area with a great deal of experience with hurricanes. Frankly, the planning and response efforts that I have seen from FEMA and the rest of the Federal Government leaves my confidence in our ability to respond to any kind of domestic disaster shaken and makes me fear for my constituents should a hurricane, or other disaster of this magnitude strike south Florida.

There are some serious questions to be asked: Why with several days' notice about this storm, were more people not evacuated? Where was the plan to evacuate people who did not have the money or ability to evacuate themselves? When the size and strength of the storm was known, why wasn't a response team in place to go into affected areas immediately? Why was Federal funding to reinforce the levee system cut when it would have saved thousands of lives and billions of dollars? And, given that this disaster was the first large scale test of the new Department of Homeland Security and their Federal Emergency Management Agency, does this new structure improve or hamper disaster prevention, response and relief?

Yesterday morning, President Bush went onto NBC's Today Show and made the following statement: "The critical thing was to get people out of there before the disaster. Some people chose not to obey that order. That was a mistake on their part." President Bush's statement shows a complete lack of understanding of, and insensitivity to, the plight facing so many American families today, or why those families died or are now suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The United States Census Bureau reports that in 2004 over 23 percent of the population of the city of New Orleans was living at or below the poverty level. The poverty level is \$12,334 a year for a family of two, or \$19,307 a year for a family of four. Mr. President, when a husband and wife only make \$12,334 they very likely do not have a car, or money for gasoline, or even money for a bus fare to get out of town. It was not a mistake on their part, but rather Mr. President, a mistake on your part that you did not have a plan to evacuate these families from the path of imminent danger.

One thing is very clear; poor planning, and a slow response to an imminent disaster has cost hundreds of people their lives and hundreds more will die if the Government does not significantly increase its response. Even today, there are over 200,000 National Guard troops that have not been called up to help in the relief efforts. Even today, the Navy's Hospital ship *Comfort* remains in Baltimore Harbor, and will not set sail for the Gulf until Saturday and will not reach the Gulf for a week after that.

Our government must be better prepared to plan and respond to disasters of every kind in this country. But for right now, we must mobilize the incredible resources of the Federal Government and respond to this crisis in a manner that recognizes that people are dying as we speak because not enough has been done to help them.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 225 and ask for its immediate adoption so that the people of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama can get the relief they

sorely need through funding from the Federal Government.

I offer my prayers to the victims of Hurricane Katrina and my thoughts and condolences are with the many families who have lost loved ones and family members.

During turbulent times such as this, I have witnessed the generosity of great Americans from across our country who have come to the aid of their fellow citizens. Now is the time those citizens of the Gulf Coast communities need our help. In my home State of California, those citizens who in recent years have suffered through devastating earthquakes, mudslides and brushfires know firsthand how natural disasters can dramatically impact their lives and how challenging it can be to rebuild homes, communities and families. Already the people in southern California and in my district are hard at work donating both time and resources to the many victims in the impacted Gulf Coast communities.

We Californians have a long tradition of helping our neighbors through devastating tragedies and disasters. And in that spirit, I call on all Americans to help support the rescue and recovery efforts that are under way in the region affected by Hurricane Katrina.

I applaud the leadership of Congress in convening this special session today to ensure that funding will be made available to help rebuild the lives of the families affected and the communities in which they live.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to say that our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have suffered through the catastrophic event of Hurricane Katrina. I also rise today in support of the \$10 billion supplemental spending bill to help deal with the ravages left in its wake. This category 4 Hurricane has laid waste to our Gulf Coast region, including the city of New Orleans. Today, I am outraged, outraged at the failure of our Federal Government to have planned for and adequately responded to a disaster we all knew could happen.

I join millions of Americans who have been stunned by the television coverage showing the desperation of thousands and thousands of our citizens and the failure of our Government to provide them with essential services—food, water, medical care, and sanitary conditions.

Today, I want to talk about the situation in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast and the immense suffering and desperation that the people there are experiencing. It has been 5 days since Hurricane Katrina slammed into the region and yet tens of thousands of Americans are without food and water. Lawlessness has settled in New Orleans and we have not provided the support necessary to secure the region. Tens of thousands of citizens are still stranded in shelters and we have not been able to evacuate them to safer areas; and thousands of residents of New Orleans are in need of rescue from their flood-filled homes and we have not mobilized the personnel necessary to search for them and bring them to safety.

Today, as thousands of residents of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region face the possibility of death, I am outraged that the Federal Government failed to adequately plan for the hurricane as it approached this very vulnerable region. Last Friday, the hurricane's potential danger was clear, yet we did a poor job of getting resources in place.

After the hurricane struck, we did not activate the full resources of the Federal Government to assist the region. Instead, we relied on local and State governments, entities that were clearly overwhelmed and did not have the resources necessary to deal with a catastrophe of this magnitude.

Today, I am outraged at the failure of government to protect our citizens. Last year, James Lee Witt, former head of FEMA, testified before a congressional hearing, saying: "I am extremely concerned that the ability of our Nation to prepare for and respond to disasters has been sharply eroded. I hear from the emergency managers, local and State leaders and first responders nearly every day that the FEMA they knew and worked well with has now disappeared."

Today, we must bring the full weight of the Federal Government to bear in this crisis. I call on the Federal Government to send in the necessary personnel to rescue those in need and to restore order to the region. I also call on the Federal Government to open its facilities in order to share the burden of providing temporary housing for those who have been displaced.

Once we deal with the human tragedy that is now taking place, I call for congressional hearings that will examine what went wrong. Why our most vulnerable citizens were left to fend for themselves and why an entire region was not prepared for such a catastrophic event. I also call for congressional hearings to investigate the gas gouging that has spread across the Nation—taking advantage of human tragedy to make a profit. Hurricane Katrina has inflicted grievous pain on our country. I want to be sure that in the future we are prepared to deal effectively and competently with any catastrophic event that should occur.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of such a grave humanitarian catastrophe, one of the worst in our Nation's history, our thoughts and prayers are with those touched by tragedy and coping with loss.

Relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina are being carried out unabated in the face of great destruction, and much more needs to be done. Relief workers are locating survivors, evacuating those in harm's way, finding temporary shelter for the displaced and beginning to clean up debris. Over 20,000 National Guard troops and thousands of local law enforcement are working hard to maintain order and keep victims safe.

For this massive undertaking to continue and improve, it is essential that the Federal Emergency Management Agency has the funds needed to carry relief efforts through these crucial early days, as well as the long weeks ahead. Congress stands united with the President and with those affected in Gulf Coast States. The speaker has used his emergency powers to call us back to Washington to appropriate a supplemental \$10.5 billion to FEMA and the Department of Defense. As the scope and scale of this tragedy become clearer, we will be ready to take additional action.

Under desperate and trying conditions, the soul of the South remains strong. In large measure, the people of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, as well as Florida, are coping with lost lives, flattened houses and flooded businesses with great dignity and perseverance.

The Gulf Coast and the Port of New Orleans are vital to our economy and home to

many important industries. Oil refineries, grain shipments, tourism and international trade are all affected by this natural disaster. While we urgently cope with the suffering of our fellow Americans, Congress is also mindful of the hurricane's economic fallout. We are committed to minimizing the adverse national and international economic affects of Katrina.

The lesson of past national tragedies, most recently September 11, 2001, is that when this country faces calamity, the American people and their elected representatives respond with overwhelming generosity, compassion and action. We also saw this with the response to the December 2004 Asian tsunami. So to those who are still in dire need of help, I can say with confidence that help is on the way. And help will not end with the rooftop rescue or the evacuation to another city. Congress, the President and FEMA will see this effort through until the very end.

There is still much hardship, loss and grief to endure, and the road to reconstructing lives, communities and jobs will be difficult. But, as we have before, this country will come together to aid those now suffering. We will get relief on the ground so the Gulf Coast region can begin rebuilding from the ground up.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this necessary and important appropriations measure.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, nothing tears at our hearts or bruises us emotionally as much as the pain and suffering of people trapped by the horrific natural disaster in our southern Gulf States this week.

Each of us watches helplessly from our living rooms, as TV screens fill with the faces of young and old, and we hear the voices, all beseeching us for the very basics of life: water, food, shelter, and safety.

These images and sounds fill us with pain, frustration and dismay. Our voices blend with those of our American brothers and sisters who need a helping hand: "Do something."

Like every other American, I wanted to load up my car with food and water and drive to New Orleans or one of the other cities so badly damaged and be there not only to give them sustenance, but also to tell them that we care about them and what has and is happening to them.

But the truth is that if we all did what we want to do, we would just magnify the problems.

And so we do what we can: we send donations of money and supplies, we send our National Guard and local law enforcement and emergency workers. And we yell at the government because we believe that in America, we ought to be better equipped to deal with such emergencies.

You know what? We should be better prepared. That is an issue we will deal with in the weeks and months ahead. The victims of Hurricane Katrina need us today, and our initial focus should be to meet their needs. Congress, by approving this major financial aid package, is responding with the rest of America to the immediate need.

Our first priority is saving lives and making sure these American citizens have their basic needs met. Once that occurs, we can move forward with long-range planning for these citizens who lost so much, and communities struggling with recovery.

Mr. Speaker, there is a time for campaigning and a time for governing, a time for

leadership and compassion and a time for congressional hearings. Today is a time that we pull together with love of our neighbors and the love of our Nation to bring relief, safety and security to our fellow Americans in need.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my condolences to the families who have lost loved ones in the natural disaster we have witnessed over the last 5 days. Our hearts go out to them and we are working desperately to address this desperate situation.

I pay tribute to Democratic Leader PELOSI for giving this effort to provide for supplemental funding relief for the hurricane victims in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida the priority attention and urgency it deserves. Because of her forward thinking and sensitivity to the scope of this disaster, we are here today in this special session of Congress doing what we should be doing: responding to the needs of the thousands of victims of this natural disaster to make sure the money is available for food; water; emergency supplies; temporary shelter; command, control, and communications networks; public safety; public health and sanitation; and other forms of emergency assistance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for acceding to the gentlelady's call to convene the House to pass this \$10 billion package. Today, we demonstrate that partisan politics stop when it comes to responding to the needs of thousands of Americans who find their very lives imperiled by Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. We are showing that Congress can lead and provide a rapid response when misfortune strikes.

This is not the time for recriminations. There will be plenty of time for that when Congress reconvenes next week to review the slowness and inadequacy of the response and consequence management efforts of the natural disaster that struck our Gulf Coast. The experience of my congressional office in trying to contact responsible Federal agencies involved with the effort shows that communications between congressional offices, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and other responding Federal agencies has not improved since 9/11.

What shocks us as Americans is that the we are witnessing human tragedies on our television screens on a scale we do not expect to see in America. It is hard for us to accept a human tragedy like we see in the third world happen on our own shores. It is even harder for us to accept that our response to this human tragedy is no better than what we see by lesser and undeveloped countries. The lack of an effective response and plan of action has us all in shock.

While no class has escaped the human tragedy, the disproportionate numbers of victims are black, poor, aged, disabled or otherwise physically debilitated. These are the people who are the lowest priority in emergency evacuation plans because we do not know how to address their fundamental needs. They are the first who depend on the Government for services, the first at the mercy of the elements but the last on civic emergency action plans.

Our hearts go out to those who are stranded and dispossessed. We need leadership to address their needs. The private sector like the hotel industry and the civic community

must step up to offer assistance. The city of Detroit has offered to transport 500 families to Detroit to shelter them and meet their basic human needs. The Mayor of Detroit, the Honorable Kwame Kilpatrick, has worked with FEMA, local hotels and food manufacturers to provide temporary shelter for an estimated 500 families. He has gained the cooperation of the city of Detroit School District to accommodate the children of dislocated families. We need more State and civic leaders to step up.

I also want to acknowledge the offers of assistance our government has received from the international community. Governments from other countries have offered their expertise in airlifting residents and in other humanitarian response recovery techniques in our time of need. I hope we are big enough to accept these offers where there is a need.

Again, I thank Democratic Leader PELOSI and the Speaker for seeing that Congress does its part to respond quickly. To all the victims, their families and loved ones, please know we stand with you in our actions and prayers.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, this amount of money is only a fraction of what is needed and everyone here knows it. Let it go forward quickly with heart-felt thanks to those who are helping to save lives with necessary food, water, shelter, medical care and security. Congress must also demand accountability with the appropriations. Because until there are basic changes in the direction of this government, this tragedy will multiply to apocalyptic proportions.

The administration yesterday said that no one anticipated the breach of the levees. Did the administration not see or care about the 2001 FEMA warning about the risk of a devastating hurricane hitting the people of New Orleans? Did it not know or care that civil and Army engineers were warning for years about the consequences of failure to strengthen the flood control system? Was it aware or did it care that the very same administration, which decries the plight of the people today, cut from the budget tens of millions needed for Gulf-area flood control projects?

Countless lives have been lost throughout the South with a cost of hundreds of billions in ruined homes, businesses, and the destruction of an entire physical and social infrastructure.

The President said an hour ago that the Gulf Coast looks like it has been obliterated by a weapon. It has. Indifference is a weapon of mass destruction.

Our indifferent government is in a crisis of legitimacy. If it continues to ignore its basic responsibility for the health and welfare of the American people, will there ever be enough money to clean up after their indifference?

As our government continues to squander human and monetary resources of this country on the war, people are beginning to ask, "Isn't it time we began to take care of our own people here at home? Isn't it time we rescued our own citizens? Isn't it time we fed our own people? Isn't it time we sheltered our own people? Isn't it time we provided physical and economic security for our own people?" And isn't it time we stopped the oil companies from profiting from this tragedy?

We have plenty of work to do here at home. It is time for America to come home and take care of its own people who are drowning in the streets, suffocating in attics, dying from ex-

posure to the elements, oppressed by poverty and illness, wracked with despair and hunger and thirst.

The time is now to bring back to the United States the 78,000 National Guard troops currently deployed overseas into the Gulf Coast region.

The time is now to bring back to the U.S. the equipment which will be needed for search and rescue, for clean up and reclamation.

The time is now for Federal resources, including closed Army bases, to be used for temporary shelter for those who have been displaced by the hurricane.

The time is now to plan massive public works, with jobs going to the people of the Gulf Coast States, to build new levees, new roads, bridges, libraries, schools, colleges and universities and to rebuild all public institutions, including hospitals. Medicare ought to be extended to everyone, so every person can get the physical and mental health care they might need as a result of the disaster.

The time is now for the Federal Government to take seriously the research of scientists who have warned for years about the dangers of changes in the global climate, and to prepare other regions of the country for other possible weather disasters until we change our disastrous energy policies.

The time is now for changes in our energy policy, to end the domination of oil and fossil fuel and to invest heavily in alternative energy, including wind and solar, geothermal and biofuels.

As bad as this catastrophe will prove to be, it is in fact only a warning. Our government must change its direction, it must become involved in making America a better place to live, a place where all may survive and thrive. It must get off the path of war and seek the path of peace, peace with the natural environment, peace with other nations, peace with a just economic system.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina has caused unprecedented destruction to our neighbors to the south. We in North Carolina understand the destructive power of hurricanes and floods, and our thoughts and prayers are with all the victims who suffered through the storm and suffer in its aftermath.

I am pleased that Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI called for Congress to reconvene early in order to provide the needed personnel, equipment and resources for this disaster.

We must immediately devote the personnel, resources and funding necessary to help these people get the food, health care and safe shelter they need before rebuilding can begin, and this \$10.5 billion is a good start.

The recovery from the Hurricane Katrina disaster will be long and difficult. I commend all the brave first responders, FEMA employees and volunteers with the Red Cross and other charitable agencies as they work to provide relief to the hurricane victims. People's lives have been changed forever, and the American people have responded with their money, time and prayers to help our neighbors.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the bipartisan leadership—both for the whole House and for the Appropriations Committee—for this urgent response to our neighbors and families in the Gulf Coast region.

The notion of refugees in America is a foreign concept for us, but I know the American family will respond fully and completely in relo-

cating the people who have fled the Gulf region; and who must now necessarily migrate north and make temporary lives somewhere else for at least the next few months.

I want to note something interesting to my colleagues. Just last week before the Base Closure and Realignment Commission, BRAC, I pointed out to the commissioners that the Gulf of Mexico has serious security needs.

With the BRAC recommended closures of Naval Station Ingleside and Ellington Air Field in Texas, and the closure of NS Pascagoula in Mississippi, we were leaving the Gulf of Mexico vulnerable to an attack that could disrupt our oil supplies—both the wells in the Gulf and the refineries along our southern coast—and our vital trade routes. Post-BRAC, we will have not a single surface Navy ship in the Gulf of Mexico.

Mother Nature painted a very vivid picture for all of us of how a major disruption in the Gulf can affect our Nation and our economy.

I will be talking to DOD officials and my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee to pursue a Center of Excellence for Homeland Defense and Security in the western Gulf of Mexico.

Again, I thank the House for this rapid attention to the dire need for relief to our neighbors in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. I support the bill, and urge swift passage.

We must come to grips now with the fact that this is just our first drop in the bucket; this ongoing rescue and relief effort will be monumental and long term. It will be years before New Orleans and the Gulf Coast can be rebuilt. It will take our money, it will take our energy, and it will take all our hearts.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this emergency supplemental for the millions of Americans affected by the devastation stemming from Hurricane Katrina.

It is important that the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Defense, and all other federal agencies involved have all monies necessary to do the recovery and reconstruction effort the right way.

This supplemental is a down payment to ensure that the recovery effort is not halted due to a lack of money. But, it is only a down payment. We must work in the coming months and years to make sure that Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and all the other states dramatically affected by Hurricane Katrina are rebuilt and that the survivors are given the means necessary to begin their recovery.

I ask Americans all across this great country to open their hearts and donate to the effort to help their fellow citizens in their time of need. The recovery effort demands that private business, private charities, private citizens, and the government come together to help those in their time of crisis.

I applaud Leader PELOSI and Speaker HASTERT for bringing the House back into session today to pass this supplemental. It is one small way we in the Congress can ensure that the money from the federal treasury remain flowing so our first responders can do the work that needs to be done to help the survivors of this terrible disaster.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time for all Americans to come together and help those in need. It is time to get the survivors to safety, provide them with food, water, and shelter, and to ensure that their basic needs for survival are taken care of.

I rise in strong support of this supplemental and ask for all Americans to help their fellow citizens in their time of need.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with the Members of this body—Republican and Democrat, liberal and conservative, southerner and westerner, black, white and brown—in support of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill for Hurricane Katrina. Just as all of you were there for my constituents last year after an unprecedented four hurricanes devastated my home state of Florida, I stand here today with you to offer my full support for all of those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

On the eve of August 25, 2005, Katrina first made landfall in South Florida. Broward and Miami-Dade Counties were the first to witness the strength of this devastating storm. As a result of her strength and ferocity, more than 150 families saw their homes, some even in my district, receive major damage or were completely destroyed. Tens of thousands of homes and businesses were out of power for days and many in South Florida remain homeless today because of Katrina.

Despite this obvious disaster, I find myself today infuriated that FEMA has denied individual assistance to the residents of Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. The agency claims that the magnitude of the disaster in South Florida does not merit Federal assistance. I disagree. It does not matter if 1 or 100 homes are destroyed because of a natural disaster. Federal emergency disaster assistance exists to help those in need when they have no one but the Federal Government to turn to. It is beyond irresponsible for FEMA to neglect the needs of my constituents simply because the extent of the damage does not reach some artificial and fluid threshold.

My thoughts and prayers remain with the residents of Florida who have been affected by the storm, as well as the people of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. As this great body convenes today, I am deeply troubled by the pictures that I see on television and in the press. Our fellow citizens are in a battle not only with the elements of Mother Nature but also homelessness, disease, starvation, and dehydration.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that this body is heeding the call of the Democratic Leader and meeting today to pass this emergency supplemental. But I am shocked that in the richest country in the world with our vast resources, our own fellow citizens are literally dying in the streets of New Orleans because we cannot get them food to eat and water to drink. I've even heard that organizations such as the American Red Cross are being prohibited from delivering essential humanitarian assistance to New Orleans residents because they are being prohibited access to downtown. I am outraged.

Making matters worse, our news programs now refer to the residents of New Orleans as refugees, as if they are not American citizens. Our words are extremely powerful, and the use of the term "refugee" suggests that Katrina's victims are second class individuals who rather than expecting the assistance from their fellow citizens instead should be grateful for anything they receive. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Americans must answer the calls of civic and moral responsibility that comes during a tragedy such as Katrina. Do all that you can—

donate money and supplies, open your homes, say a prayer—so that the lives of those who have lost so much can return to some form of normalcy.

We have a responsibility to do all that we can to help those most in need, and our government must do everything in its power. If the roads are flooded and we are unable to drive people out of downtown New Orleans, then airlift them out. Figure out a way to get water and food to those who need it. Do it quickly, and do it now. The lives of our fellow citizens are at stake.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, our first concern over the coming weeks must be assisting those who need to be rescued, who need essential supplies and medical attention, and who need temporary shelter to survive these difficult days. I am committed to helping provide that assistance and Congress was correct to pass this aid package today to ensure that immediate resources are available for those efforts.

However, as the recovery continues and we begin the rebuilding process, we cannot forget about the problems that have plagued our response to the hurricane. It is not too soon to ask what went wrong so that we can avoid those missteps in the coming weeks and in future disasters.

Early indications point to the fact that once again, our response teams have been hampered with the inability to effectively communicate with one another. In Oklahoma City in 1995, at Columbine in 1999, and then again in New York in 2001, our first responders were unable to communicate. The administration has done little to address this problem despite my efforts over the last four years. We must find out exactly how communications deteriorated as quickly as they did and put in place a real interoperability plan.

In addition, there appears to be a massive disconnect between the information the government has issued on the aid effort and what individuals on the ground have experienced. We have to make sure that aid gets to those in need immediately—right now, too many still lack basic necessities and that is simply unacceptable.

We have known that the levees in New Orleans could not withstand the most severe storms. Former Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt recently stated that in the 1990s, planning for a New Orleans nightmare scenario included the pre-deploying nearby of hospital ships and ships with pumps to remove water from the below-sea-level city. We have to ask—why was this not done? Was it incompetence, a lack of leadership or has the deployment of National Guard troops to Iraq slowed recovery efforts?

We also need to ask if reorganizations of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) offer us the best protection against all hazards. Prior to the creation of DHS, FEMA was largely viewed as a very effective organization. Since it has been placed in DHS, FEMA's role in preparedness and response has changed. Does the current departmental organization offer the best model of response to any type of hazard, be it a natural disaster or man-made?

These are difficult questions but they are necessary ones. In the coming weeks, I will push for answers even as I work with Members of the Homeland Security Committee to make sure that the current crisis is addressed

and victims are given the assistance they still so desperately need.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and prayers today, and for the last few days, have been with the people of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and their family members. The Gulf Coast region has experienced what will long be remembered as one of the worse natural disasters in our country's history. In the weeks, months and years to come a massive clean up will occur and then we will work to rebuild the homes, roads, businesses, and schools affected. But we will not be able to forget the death, the destruction or the emotional toll this terrible tragedy has inflicted on the people affected and across the Gulf Coast.

I am glad that we in Congress are providing the Federal Emergency Management Agency with the additional funds required to ensure that the needed rescue and recovery mission continues unimpeded. We have all seen on the television and read in the newspapers about the current situation in the Gulf Coast. The images and stories are heartbreaking and deeply troubling, but they are of people we know and they are our fellow citizens. Many of us know people who live in New Orleans, might have been vacationing there, or were supposed to return to college this fall. These are our family members, our friends, and our neighbors, and we cannot let them down. My own sister lives in the heart of New Orleans and as we meet now she still waits for evacuation—for the fifth day without running water or power.

The essential role of government is to provide for its citizens in their time of need. Today, we cannot say that we have done a good job in that critical task. Too many of our own people are suffering in horrific conditions and there exists a general state of lawlessness in a few areas and more concerning is that many feel they have been abandoned. If we cannot meet the needs of these clearly desperate citizens in the Gulf Coast, we need to seriously reconsider our budget priorities and what we value as a society. I am troubled that the pleas of regional officials and those from cities like New Orleans for an increased Federal commitment to guard against such storms have not been heeded over the past few years.

It is my deep hope that the Federal Government, with the money we are providing today, will ensure that order is restored to the affected region and that no one anywhere in the Gulf Coast is without food, water or shelter. But in the weeks and months ahead we need also to ensure that the proper resources are dedicated to guarantee that a tragedy like this and its indescribable scale is not repeated again. What that means is a commitment by the Federal Government to the people of America to meet their domestic needs. For too long this government has tried to do more with less, it has tried to provide for our people on the cheap. But this week has reminded us that there are too many critical tasks and services that only government can provide and that we ensure that the Federal Government provides the essential funding that these services require.

This terrible tragedy has also reminded us of the generous and compassionate nature of the American people. Already the Red Cross has received well over \$100 million in donations to the relief effort. People all across America are emptying their coin jars and offering empty rooms to help in anyway they can.

I know that this compassion will continue and I encourage all Americans to do what ever they can to help our fellow citizens in their most desperate time of need. However, I am troubled to see instances of greed in this time of desperate need. I have heard already from a number of my constituents who saw the price of gas skyrocket. I, along with other Members of Congress, will be looking into any instances of price gouging. In such a time of despair for so many, price gouging can not be tolerated.

Once again, I want to express my condolences to those who have lost loved ones in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and to share my prayers of hope for those who remain in despair. I know that much remains to be done and I am hopeful that the funding we are providing today will go a long way to meeting the desperate needs of those in the Gulf Coast. The full story of this disaster remains to be told, but I am confident that out of dark moments of this tragedy will come beacons of light for those affected and a serious discussion about our true national priorities.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with the families and individuals devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Reports that displaced residents in New Orleans and other parts of the Gulf Coast are unable to receive medical attention and basic supplies are truly horrible. This is an unacceptable situation for the wealthiest country in the world. The conditions are desperate and the full force of the Federal Government must be turned towards helping those in need.

The Federal Government is prepared to provide an unprecedented level of disaster assistance, starting today with a \$10.5 billion emergency aid package.

The recovery effort has raised several issues that must be addressed. First, once the immediate need for medical assistance, food and other resources is met, the massive job of providing housing in different communities throughout the country for the thousands of displaced victims must be undertaken. This will require an unprecedented level of coordination between federal, state and local governments and the private sector. Also, decisions must be made in terms of the reconstruction of the areas most devastated, in a manner that ensures that a tragedy of this magnitude will not repeat itself.

Second, the alleged unwillingness of the federal personnel assigned to the disaster to use the resources available to them in a timely fashion must be investigated. The fact that there was one instance of a military helicopter being fired upon is not an excuse for helicopters not to land or buses not to transport people. Questions with regard to class, race and discriminatory attitudes must be addressed in a candid and constructive manner.

Third, the personnel and agencies responsible for responding to this disaster are the same as the nation would call on in the event of a terrorist attack. Their present response, in the President's words, has been unacceptable and inexcusable. We must ensure that future responses are dramatically different.

In the coming days and weeks ahead, I encourage every American to consider volunteering to help our fellow citizens in this time of great need. My offices have received hundreds of phone calls from constituents who are eager to help in anyway possible, and this will allow the generosity of the human spirit to prevail.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the bill is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following privileged Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 51) providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate, and a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The Clerk read the Senate concurrent resolution, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 51

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That when the Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on Thursday, September 1, or on Friday, September 2, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until 12 noon on Tuesday, September 6, 2005, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Friday, September 2, 2005, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, September 6, 2005, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Majority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, or their respective designees, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the Senate and House, respectively, to reassemble at such place and time as they may designate whenever, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Senate concurrent resolution is concurred in.

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to show compassion and readiness to work with our neighbors who are in crisis. I represent a State, West Virginia, that has had numerous flooding disasters. Collectively, we will do everything we can to help those in need. The number one priority now is the families and children who are affected. The photos from

these areas are gut wrenching, and I am sure we are just beginning to hear the heartbreaking stories. Our responses must be quicker and stronger. I know our compassion as a Nation is incredible and we are frustrated by the enormity of this crisis.

As West Virginians, we have been helped time and time again. Like those affected in this disaster action, we are hardworking, country-loving, patriotic, respectful citizens. We now wish to return our compassion to those in need. Our State has started fund drives, deployed utility professionals, our National Guard, and other means of help. We will continue. Our hearts are joined in prayer to those who need prayers the most, to give them the strength and the willpower to rebuild and go on. We will stand together to recover and rebuild the lives and the cities. This is the nature of our country and its people.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to show compassion and readiness to work to help our neighbors who are in crisis. I represent a state, West Virginia, that has had numerous flooding disasters and collectively we will do everything that we can to help those in this devastating situation.

The number one priority right now is the welfare of the families and children in their time of need. The photos from the area are gut-wrenching and we have only just begun to hear the heart breaking stories of the destruction of lives and properties.

Our responses must be quicker and stronger as we reach out to the despair. I know that our compassion as a nation is incredible and we are frustrated by the enormity of the crisis. The funding we provide today will be significant but will only take us so far.

In recent disasters around this Nation we have seen the worst of destruction that can come from both man and from nature: but the best of society. We have seen the power of this Nation when it comes together to assist those in need. In the coming hours and days, we have got to press forward to help in every way.

As West Virginians, we have been helped time and again. Like those affected in this disaster, we are hard working, country loving, patriotic, respectful citizens. We now wish to return our compassion in your hour of need. Our State has started fund drives, deployed utility professionals, sent our National Guard and other means of help. We will continue. Our hearts are joined in prayers to give those in need the strength and willpower to rebuild and go on.

To that end, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army need our support to continue their efforts on the ground. We are grateful to those who are on the ground from all emergency organizations in the Gulf Coast area to assist those who have been affected.

We will stand together to recover and rebuild the lives and cities. That is the nature of this country and its people.

HURRICANE KATRINA

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)